

REMARKS

The Applicants hereby elect to prosecute the claims of Group I, Claims 1-7 (in part), drawn to a method for detecting a predisposition to liver disease by analyzing a genotype of keratin K8 by analyzing nucleic acids, with traverse.

Specifically, Applicants request rejoinder of methods of analysis for the K8 and K18 keratins. These two proteins are obligate heterodimers, and thus are properly considered together for their effect on disease. Groups II, IV and VI are directed to the K18 keratin.

Applicants further request rejoinder of Groups I and III. Group I is directed to the analysis of nucleic acids, while Group III is directed to the analysis of a genotype. As a genotype is composed of nucleic acids, the two are properly considered together, where the genotype is a subset of nucleic acids that can be considered.

Applicants further request rejoinder of Groups I and IV. The data provided in the present application demonstrate that the keratin proteins can be analyzed for the presence of mutations encoded by nucleic acid mutations. Therefore, the analysis of proteins is demonstrated to be an alternative method of detecting keratin mutations and is properly considered together with methods of analyzing nucleic acids.

As stated in the MPEP §803, if search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner must examine the entire application on the merits, even though the entire application includes claims to independent or distinct inventions. It is the Applicants' position that it would not be unduly burdensome to perform a search on all of the claims together in the present application. Accordingly, the Applicants traverse the restriction requirement.

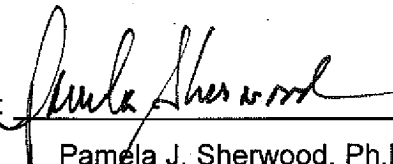
The Applicants expressly reserve the right under 35 USC §121 to file a divisional application directed to the non-elected subject matter or any subject matter disclosed in this application during the pendency of this application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 which may be required by this paper, or to credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0815, order number STAN-297.

Respectfully submitted,

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